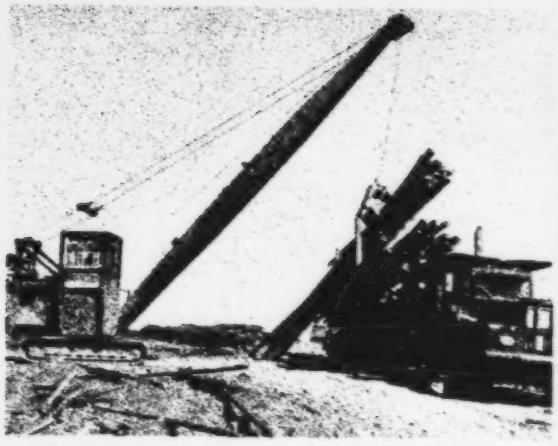

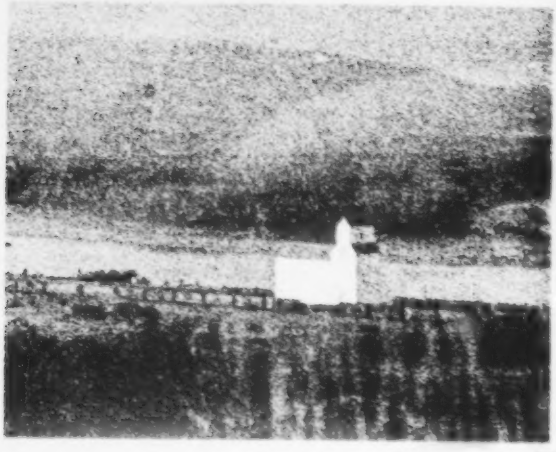

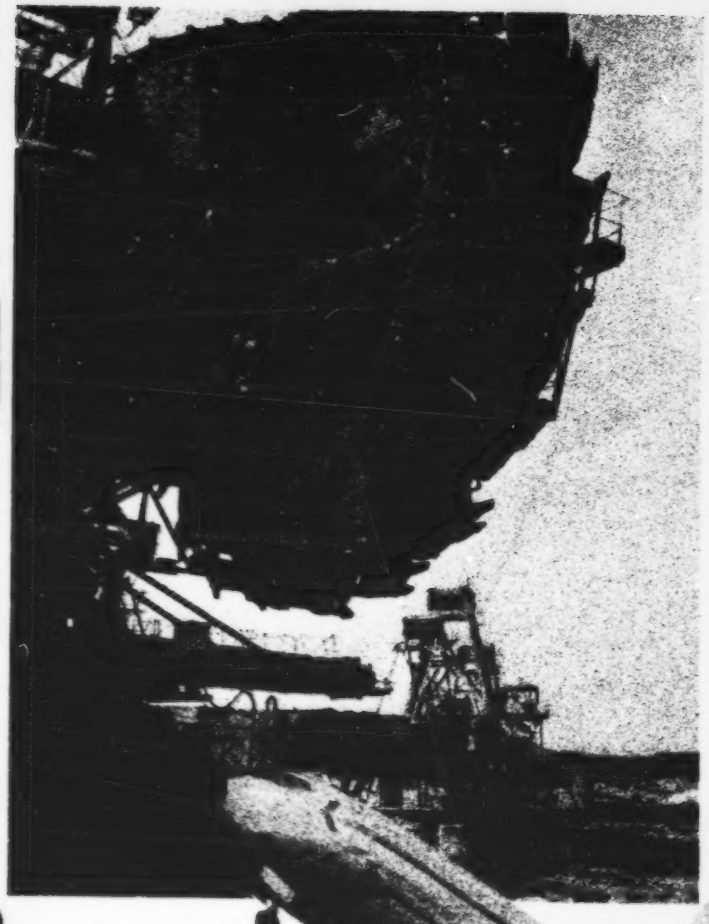

ANNUAL REPORT
1987/88

Alberta
NORTHERN ALBERTA
DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

88-04748/

LETTERS OF TRANSMITTAL

TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES

Office of the Minister

208 Legislature Building, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5K 2B6 403/427-2080

May, 1988

To Her Honor
Helen Hunley
Lieutenant-Governor of the
Province of Alberta

Madam:

The undersigned has the honor to transmit herewith, the Twenty-fourth Annual Report of the Northern Alberta Development Council.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Al "Boomer" Adair
Minister Responsible for the
Northern Alberta Development Council

Alberta
NORTHERN ALBERTA
DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

2nd Floor, Provincial Building, 9621 - 96 Avenue, Postal Bag 900-14, Peace River, Alberta, Canada T0H 2X0 403/624-6274

May, 1988

Hon. Al "Boomer" Adair
Minister Responsible for the
Northern Alberta Development Council

Sir:

The undersigned has the honor to transmit herewith, the Twenty-fourth Annual Report of the Northern Alberta Development Council.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Elliott, MLA
Beaverlodge
Chairman

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STATEMENT OF THE CHAIRMAN

Dr. C.R. (Bob) Elliott, MLA
Chairman
Northern Alberta Development Council

1988 is the 200th anniversary of two communities in northern Alberta, Fort Chipewyan and Fort Vermilion. Since these are the province's oldest communities, the Northern Alberta Development Council was pleased to provide assistance to them during the past fiscal year in the planning of their bicentennial celebrations. The Council has scheduled its forthcoming June meeting in Fort Vermilion and its August meeting in Fort Chipewyan to assist the residents and all Albertans in commemorating these significant events.

Among its other activities in 1987/88, the Northern Alberta Development Council produced a detailed position paper on Ambulance Services which was presented to the hearing of the Minister's Policy Advisory Committee on Hospitals and Medical Care, in St. Paul in June. Also in June, the Council participated in a detailed policy review and priorities meeting with Premier Don Getty.

As part of its important public information role, the Council launched a new magazine, ***Alberta North,*** to increase awareness and knowledge of northern Alberta and its people. The magazine is being distributed to junior high schools in the North and across the province. Copies are also being made available to the general public through tourist information centres and general distribution.

Two conference activities were undertaken during the year. The Council assisted the Peace River Board of Trade in hosting a very successful symposium on Downtown Revitalization and in November of 1987 the Council sponsored an important Water in Northern Alberta Conference. The Water Conference in Grande Prairie attracted over 200 delegates and was the result of two years of detailed planning.

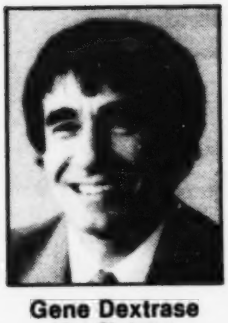
Ongoing Council activities involving public meetings, research, co-ordination and consultation, the Student Bursary Program and special initiatives in a wide variety of areas, saw the conclusion of another busy year working on behalf of the citizens of northern Alberta.

NORTHERN ALBERTA DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

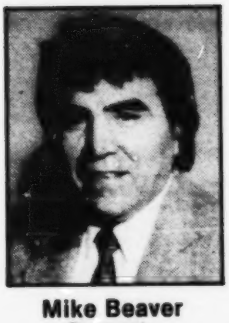
NORTHERN ALBERTA DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL 1987/88

BOB ELLIOTT, MLA
CHAIRMAN
BEAVERLODGE

HON. AL "BOOMER" ADAIR
MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR
NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT
PEACE RIVER

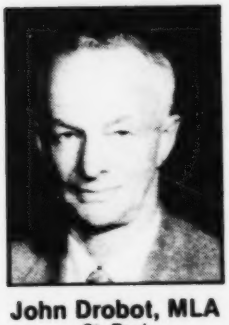


Gene Dextrase
Vice-Chairman
High Level



Mike Beaver
Desmarais

Mary Bennett
Elk Point



John Drobot, MLA
St. Paul

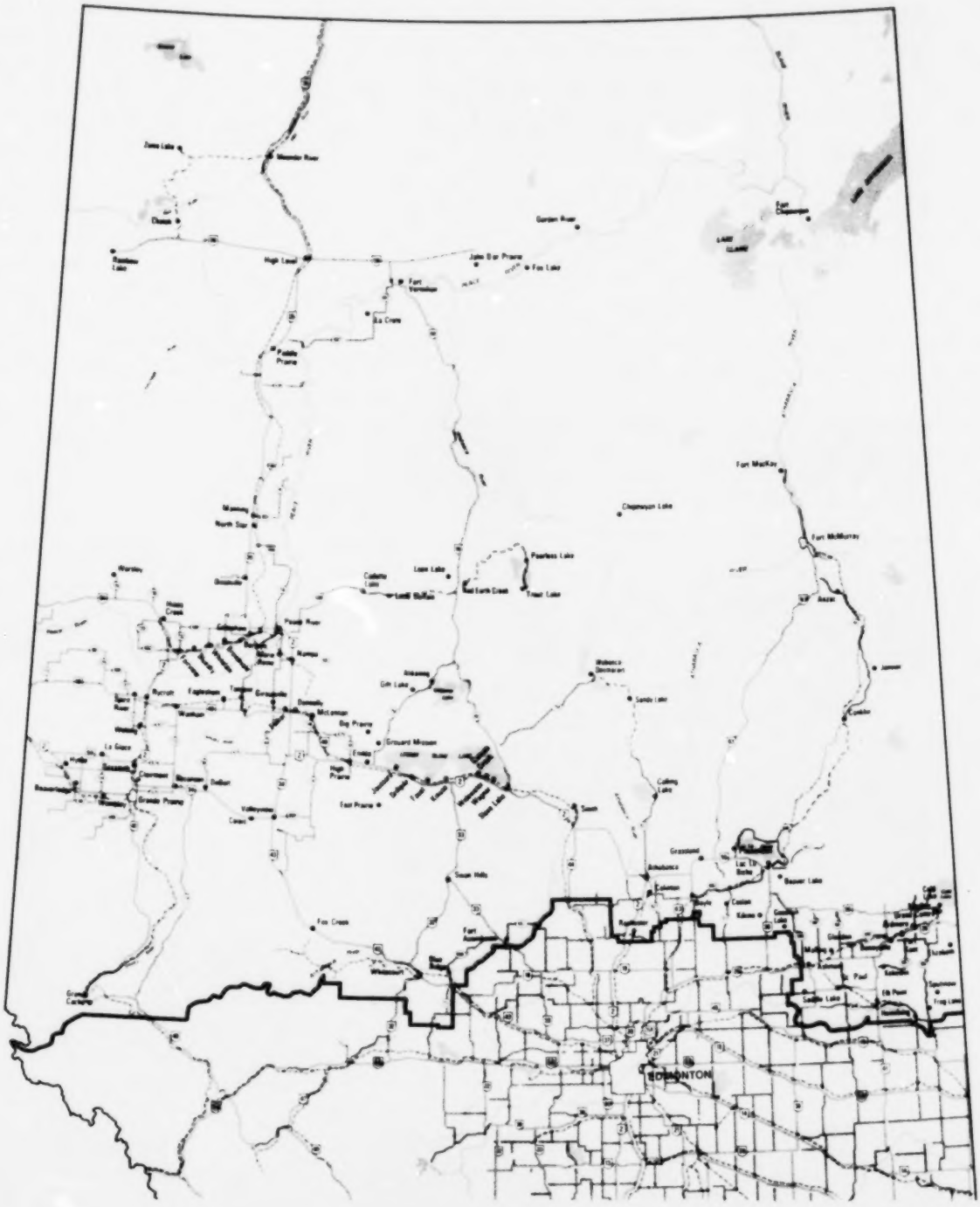
Marcel Ducharme
Bonnyville

Fred Gingerich
Athabasca

Bernie Hornby
Fox Creek

Donald Keith
Fort McMurray

Ted Sonntag
Hotchkiss



NORTHERN ALBERTA DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL AREA

COMMUNITIES WITH POPULATION OVER 75 (1981 CANADA CENSUS)

PRIMARY HIGHWAY — SECONDARY ROAD - - - - - LOC ROAD ····· RAILWAY

PRODUCED BY PROVINCIAL MAPPING SECTION, LAND INFORMATION SERVICES DIVISION, © 1988

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

The Northern Alberta Development Council was initially created in 1963 as a five member advisory body to the provincial government. It was enlarged in 1973 to a membership of 10 and currently consists of eight private citizens appointed on the basis of public nominations, and two elected Members of the Legislative Assembly.

Through its own Act, the Northern Alberta Development Council is charged with the responsibility to "investigate, monitor, plan and promote practical measures to foster and advance general development in northern Alberta, and to advise the government thereon." The Act makes specific reference to social and economic development, the development of communities and service delivery, and the development of government services and programs.

The Council, at present, has a full-time MLA Chairman and reports to the Executive Council through the Minister Responsible for Northern Development.

The Council's primary role is to provide government with a northern point of view on a wide range of issues, supplementing and complementing the perspectives of northern MLAs. A major objective of Council since 1973 has been to increase the amount of public participation in the planning and design of delivery systems for various government services in northern Alberta.

The general purposes that Council wishes to promote are:

- to enhance economic and educational opportunities within northern Alberta in order to encourage young people to stay;
- to enhance the viability of traditional northern small town and rural life;
- to support the desires and aspirations of all residents in northern Alberta for a fair share in the wealth and potential of the area;
- to support the desires of various cultural and ethnic groups within northern Alberta for maintenance of their distinctive heritage.

Through regularly scheduled public meetings and sponsorship of major conferences and seminars, the Council serves as a forum to which residents can express their ideas and concerns regarding development of the North. In addition to receiving briefs at public meetings, the Council can initiate research into particular opportunities or needs, and

often pursues, on behalf of northern residents, efforts toward the development of new programs or co-ordination of the existing service delivery.

The information service provided through the response to briefs received from the public results in the initiation of most Council activities. Nearly 60 per cent of the briefs presented to the Northern Alberta Development Council since 1973 have resulted in positive responses.

Issues considered by the Northern Alberta Development Council during the year under review were many, including industry development, natural resources, agriculture, small business development, forestry, tourism, infrastructure systems, education, health services, local government concerns and manpower needs.

A Council review meeting with the Premier was held on June 6, 1987. On June 3, 1987, the Council presented a detailed position paper on the Hearing of the Minister's Policy Advisory Committee on Hospitals and Medical Care held in St. Paul. In September of 1987, the Council assisted the Peace River Board of Trade in organizing a symposium on Downtown Revitalization.

On November 4/5/6, 1987, the Council sponsored a Conference on Water in Northern Alberta. Two hundred and twenty-three community, industry and government representatives met in Grande Prairie to review this important topic and prepare recommendations for consideration by various parties.

The Northern Alberta Development Council serves as a facilitator and catalyst, assisting the line departments of government responsible for the implementation of changes and service improvements. The Council's public participation role over the years has provided an enhanced two-way flow of information, resulting in marked improvements for all northern Albertans.

NORTHERN ALBERTA DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

PUBLIC MEETINGS

During 1987/88, the Northern Alberta Development Council held six public meetings: at Nampa in April, La Crete in June, Loon Lake in August, Grand Centre in September, Whitecourt in December and Beaverlodge in February. Three other regular monthly meetings were held in Peace River as well as a major conference and a number of special activities.

One hundred and ninety-nine briefs were received from groups and individuals in attendance at the public meetings. Each brief submitted was reviewed by the Council to determine a course of action and forwarded to various departments and agencies of government for consideration and comment. The departmental responses were then discussed by the Council, and a decision made as to whether or not the department's position and/or proposed action was appropriate. If the departmental response was felt to be inappropriate, the Council directed the Northern Development Branch to further clarify the issue through Branch directed research, or to undertake discussions with the responsible officials in order to achieve the necessary action. At times, co-ordination of the efforts of a number of departments of government was required. Brief originators were advised of the progress made on each of the ideas or concerns expressed in their submissions.

The results achieved by the Council varied greatly from brief to brief. In several instances the concerns raised were either totally or partially resolved. In some cases, the Council and Branch are continuing to work towards a practical solution which is acceptable to all involved. The current status of any of the briefs submitted to Council is available from the Northern Development Branch in Peace River.

BRIEFS

During the year, two briefs were received from Fort McMurray in the northeast region; 45 from Chipewyan Lake, Desmarais, Faust, Fort Assiniboine, High Prairie, Loon Lake, Nampa, Peerless Lake, Red Earth Creek, Slave Lake, Swan Hills, Trout Lake and Whitecourt in the central region; 21 from Ashmont, Bonnyville, Cold Lake, Grand Centre, Lac La Biche, Medley, Sputinow and St. Paul in the southeast region; 48 from Berwyn, Fort Vermilion, Grimshaw, High Level, Keg River, La Crete, Manning, Peace River, Rainbow Lake, and Worsley in the northwest region; 78 from Beaverlodge, Bonanza, Falher, Fox Creek, Girouxville, Goodfare, Grande Cache, Grande Prairie, Hythe, McLennan, Rycroft, Sexsmith, Silver Valley, Spirit River, Tangent, Wembley, Woking, Valleyview in the southwest region; and five from Edmonton and other points outside the Northern Alberta Development Council boundary.

RESEARCH AND CO-ORDINATION

Many of the issues brought to the attention of the Northern Alberta Development Council required intensive background work and follow-up activities. As a result, the Council initiated a number of research projects and efforts directed at co-ordination or modification of the delivery of government services in various areas.

Major Council activities in 1987/88 included:

- a major review and discussion meeting with the Minister Responsible for Northern Development on various policy issues
- an information exchange meeting with the British Columbia government task force reviewing a possible Northern Development Council for B.C.
- a meeting with the Chairman of the Motor Transport Board on various issues
- a meeting with the Director of the Metis Settlements Branch on concerns presented in briefs
- a meeting with the Attorney General's Department on native land claims
- a meeting with the Regional Director of CESO regarding retired executives consulting services available to northern businesses
- completion of an updated Highly Qualified Manpower Needs Survey
- initiation of a Government Service Delivery Co-ordination Project in Peace River
- completion of a background paper on the disposition of land in Alberta
- ongoing work on a review of family violence concerns in Northern Alberta
- initiation of an update of the Council's Early School Leavers Report
- completion of a major background document on Downtown Revitalization
- participation on the University of Alberta Senate Task Force to review the University's mandate in the North
- preliminary work on Youth Entrepreneurship Opportunities

- detailed activities on substance abuse in remote communities
- completion of work on a major Northern Transportation Study to evaluate present and future needs particularly in the areas of human services, resource access and economic development
- updating of the Career Opportunities in Northern Alberta brochure
- preparatory work on a Community Surveys Handbook
- completion of a substantive background document on Northern Water Management Issues
- initiation of a Northeast Post-Secondary Needs Assessment
- participation in an Independent Living Services Review in Grande Prairie
- discussions on a major review of commercial recreation development potential in northern Alberta
- initiation of a Northern Adult Literacy Project
- support for and participation in the Rural Health Care Association Conference
- support for a Fox Creek Growth Study
- support for the Peace Arch Local Employment Project
- support for the Bonnyville Child Care Development Centre
- support for a Nursing Station in Red Earth
- support for the Sunrise Project at Slave Lake
- support for a Senior Citizens' Survey of Needs at Elk Point
- support for the Minister of Recreation and Parks' proposed "Adventure North" concept
- support for Hythe Community Services Survey
- support for immediate construction of the Grande Prairie Detox Centre.

AMBULANCE SERVICES IN NORTHERN ALBERTA

The Northern Alberta Development Council presented a detailed position paper on ambulance services to the Minister's Policy Advisory Committee on Hospitals and Medical Care Hearing in St. Paul on June 3, 1987.

In preparation for the hearing, the Council commissioned research into the present ambulance service in northern Alberta. The ways in which various ambulance services operate were determined, and suggestions for improvements were solicited through direct contacts with numerous ground and air ambulance operators throughout the NADC area. This review included determining the types of equipment available, the training and qualifications of staff, the methods used to maintain patient records and bill users, the communication systems used, and ways in which ambulance services are funded.

In addition to information collected from ambulance operators, the study reviewed applicable legislation as well as equipment and staff training guidelines developed by the Alberta Ambulance Operators Association (AAOA). The latter is an industry-wide body promoting quality pre-hospital care for users of ambulance services.

The NADC-sponsored research also included telephone interviews with persons involved in various capacities in ambulance services including hospital administrators, members of hospital boards, owners of private services and air charter companies, Alberta Hospitals and Medical Care personnel, and employees of ambulance services. This was supplemented by a review of applicable legislation and regulations, guidelines prepared by the AAOA, specifications for a dedicated air ambulance aircraft, briefs to the Council and other bodies, and related material.

The collected information identified issues in the area of:

- service availability
- legislative framework
- funding and insurance
- equipment
- staff training
- ambulance dispatch
- records and statistics.

After its review the Council concluded that the present ambulance system could be substantially improved in a number of ways.

It was evident that because of the small population base in most of northern Alberta, the economics of ambulance operation are marginal at best. Most of the deficiencies are a result of the low population in northern Alberta and the long distances between fully-equipped hospitals.

It appears necessary for the provincial government to provide assistance and a better ambulance services framework in order to ensure that satisfactory service is available to all citizens in northern Alberta. This assistance was seen to take a variety of forms, the simplest involving adjusting billing procedures to ensure prompt payment of claims. As part of this, the provincial government should standardize the way in which patients are treated after they reach the nearest hospital.

Users of the ambulance system generally have no way to judge the quality of an ambulance service before they need it, and commonly have no reasonable alternative to using the ambulance on the scene when help is required. It is, therefore, the responsibility of government to ensure that any ambulance sent to assist a patient is of at least satisfactory quality.

The Council felt it was most important that the provincial government raise the minimum standards required to operate an ambulance service, and that these be included as part of a comprehensive new Ambulance Act.

The Council strongly supported continued local control over ambulance systems in northern Alberta. Local control allows municipalities to restrict competition in the ambulance business in northern Alberta, due to the marginal economics of such services. If unrestricted competition was to be permitted, the service providing the lowest cost would be the successful operation. Unfortunately, most of the expenses involved in providing ambulances relate to the cost of the vehicle and of hiring qualified staff. Thus, the lowest cost operation is often the lowest quality operation.

In those parts of the NADC area with a relatively large population, the Council concluded it will continue to be sufficient for municipal councils to declare exclusive service zones for specific ambulance operations. Subsidies may continue to be required, but the per capita amounts will likely be small. In areas where fewer residents are distributed over much larger areas, the costs of operating a good quality ambulance service, even without competition, may be higher than can be reasonably covered by the local government.

It was evident that there will always continue to be a need for volunteers in the ambulance system throughout much of northern Alberta. The present system provides adequate care, but it could be substantially better if the skills of volunteers were improved and if the supply of volunteers was more certain. Such problems are region-wide, and cannot be adequately dealt with on a local level. The provincial government could help by improving the delivery of ambulance attendant training programs and by assisting with volunteer management training programs for administrators.

Lastly, the Northern Alberta Development Council recognized that it is not practical to expect ambulance response times in rural areas to approach those common in major urban areas. However, the Council firmly believes that all Albertans are entitled to quality health care from any ambulance called to assist them.

The specific Council recommendations intended to help achieve this goal were:

- that the provincial government enact a comprehensive Ambulance Act as quickly as practical. Until a new Act can be adopted, a guide to the operation of an ambulance system should be prepared and distributed. The guide should be in non-technical language and it should clearly indicate which Acts and regulations apply to which aspects of ambulance operations, and what each Act/regulation means to an operator or a user.

- that delivery of ambulance services remain a local responsibility, subject to services meeting provincially-mandated minimum standards.

- that the cost for inter-hospital transfers, both in-patient and out-patient, be borne by the hospital transferring the patient. It is recognized that this may require increases in hospital grants through the medical care programs.

- that private insurance companies be required to pay an ambulance bill and then to determine which company is responsible for the exact proportions of the bill. Initial payment shall be on the basis of equal share for each company.

- that the provincial government streamline the payment of bills for ambulance services, so that all claims are settled within two months of receipt.

- that the provincial government reach agreements with all other provinces, and implement procedures based on those agreements to ensure prompt payment of ambulance bills.

- that a consistent minimum standard be required for all Class B ambulances. The current AAOA standard for Emergency Response Units is suggested for adoption as the new minimum.

- that local municipalities retain their present right to designate exclusive service areas for ambulance services. The right to require more than minimum standards of equipment and training should also be retained.

- that the provincial government take immediate steps to ensure compliance with all regulations governing ambulance services in Alberta.

- that the provincial government develop programs to deliver training and upgrading courses for ambulance personnel at regular intervals throughout northern Alberta.

- that all ambulance services be required to have a radio using the designated ambulance frequency of 158.76.

- that all hospitals be equipped with sufficient base station units and ensure that staff is available to operate them.

- that the provincial government investigate methods for ensuring complete coverage of all areas of northern Alberta with a reliable radio communication network for use by ambulances.

- that the provincial government adapt volunteer management programs such as those developed by Alberta Recreation and Parks for use by ambulance service administrators. These programs will be used to recruit, encourage and retain volunteer attendants in rural ambulance services.

- that the present system of local dispatch systems be retained. The provincial government should assist local services to co-ordinate activities within their regions to ensure that all calls are handled as efficiently as possible.

- that the present system of using a few dedicated aircraft supplemented with charters from private operators be continued.

- that the provincial government collect comprehensive statistics on use of ambulance services throughout the province.

Copies of the position paper are available from the Northern Development Branch in Peace River.

MEETING WITH THE PREMIER

On June 26, 1987, Premier Getty convened a policy and priority discussion meeting with the members of the Northern Alberta Development Council and the Minister Responsible for Northern Development.

The Premier complimented the members on their dedication to the North and the volume of work undertaken by the Council. He noted the valuable role of the Council in enhancing public participation in the ongoing development of northern Alberta. He emphasized the Council role in public information, policy advice and co-ordination. He also felt the Canada/Alberta Northern Development Agreement was a valuable economic development mechanism.

Among the policy areas discussed with the Premier were the topics of:

- agricultural producer assistance
- northern tourism programs
- forestry development proposals
- continuing transportation needs
- drainage and water development
- downtown revitalization programs
- municipal infrastructure replacement needs
- educational financing, student bursaries and school dropout mitigation
- social service needs in alcohol treatment and family violence intervention
- native services in the areas of employment and community development.

ALBERTA NORTH MAGAZINE

Over the years as the Council has travelled the North and met with many citizens, prospective investors, students, and government and municipal leaders, it has become acutely aware of the valuable role up-to-date, informative publications have in developing and promoting the area. Council has also long had as one of its key priorities, the enhancement of education in northern Alberta.

In response to these two factors, the Northern Alberta Development Council launched a new magazine in June of 1987. The magazine, ***Alberta North***, is aimed at the junior high school population and the public at large. Ten thousand copies of the first issue were

distributed to all junior high schools across the North and left with tourist information centres, municipal offices, and hospital wards and doctor's offices in northern Alberta. Also, copies were provided to Edmonton and Calgary junior high school classes. A second edition was distributed in February of 1988.

Alberta North's first two editions contained a foreword by the Chairman; a story on northern Alberta as Canada's best kept secret; historical writings on Sheridan Lawrence — Emperor of the Peace; Isabelle Little Bear — Daughter of the Trail; John Gullion — Boat Builder on the Athabasca; and Betty McNaught — Bright Light of Beaverlodge; and articles on oil sands development, CFB Cold Lake, Athabasca University and the 200th Anniversary of Fort Chipewyan and Fort Vermilion.

Contributions and fiction stories have appeared on Native spiritual symbols, growing up on the shores of Lesser Slave Lake, "The UFO That Found St. Paul" and "How the Squirrel Scorched His Fur." Trivia questions on northern Alberta and "Fun Time in the North," a listing of recreational and tourism attractions, round out the magazine.

After a second set of Fall/Spring publications in the upcoming fiscal year, the Council will evaluate the success and benefit of the magazine. The initial response from schools and the public has been encouraging.

Copies of the magazine are available from the Northern Development Branch in Peace River.

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION IN NORTHERN ALBERTA

Higher retail leakage, difficulty attracting new businesses, and fluctuating economic conditions are some of the challenges currently facing northern communities. Downtown revitalization is one initiative being undertaken by a number of northern communities in an effort to develop and strengthen their downtown business climate. To become more familiar with this concept, the Northern Alberta Development Council undertook a detailed review of downtown revitalization.

A steering committee consisting of 11 individuals, from both private industry and government, was established and identified five objectives:

- to determine and describe what programs presently exist in Alberta for downtown revitalization and to identify any gaps which may surface

- to analyze and evaluate existing downtown revitalization programs in other provinces

- to determine community concerns and interests regarding downtown revitalization in northern communities

- to explore the economic results of revitalization in the community

- to make conclusions based on these findings.

Interviews and discussions were conducted with business people, community leaders and government representatives from Alberta and from downtown revitalization programs across Canada. A survey of all 26 northern towns was carried out, as well as an extensive literature review.

Several major findings and conclusions emerged from the course of the study:

- Successful downtown revitalization requires a commitment to a comprehensive approach involving organization, promotion, marketing and design. Although physical improvements may occur within this process, revitalization cannot rely on beautification alone. A dynamic revitalization program requires both economic and physical components to be successful.

- A number of success factors have been identified in the literature. Some emerge as critical to success and crucial in any revitalization endeavor:

  — The process of revitalization must be initiated and controlled by the businesses and the community themselves. Decisions and actions must come from the local level if there is to be long-term commitment and co-operation.

  — A strong commitment is vital in fulfilling the goal of revitalization. Both public and private sectors must believe that with time, energy and money, the downtown area can be restored to its functional state.

  — Co-operation among all of the key players is a critical factor in downtown revitalization. The businesspeople, town administrators, municipal council, local planners, and public must all be willing to overcome differences in working toward a common goal.

  — Full-time management has been identified as very important to the success of a

revitalization project. Co-ordinating, organizing, and communicating can more effectively be accomplished by someone whose time is dedicated to the project as opposed to volunteers with other commitments.

- A generic trend in the process of revitalization can be identified and involves five phases: the initial phase (the spark, exploring issues and establishing support, public awareness and setting goals and objectives), establishing an organization, preparing a project outline, implementing the project and monitoring the project. The local process initiated, developed and operated by the community enhances the success of the project.

- Evidence from a survey of a cross-section of six revitalizing communities in B.C. points to an increase in economic development, business sales and tourism activity. The sales increases ranged from 27% reported in one community to a high of 84% in another. Other measured factors implied the program was very successful. Other revitalized Alberta communities are also seeing results. Old Strathcona in Edmonton has had 80 new businesses open in the last two years. In five years the Fringe Festival has increased visitor attendance from 7,500 to 119,000 and increased revenues from $30,000 to $200,000. In three years Red Deer has decreased its vacancy rate from 23% to less than 1%, added 62 businesses and 16 professional offices, created an estimated 225 jobs, and seen 20 business expansions. Approximately $6.5 million has been spent in Red Deer by the private sector on physical structure improvements, expansions and renovations.

- Downtown revitalization can be an effective program any time, but becomes particularly important in periods of economic slowdown. While it cannot be proven conclusively, it appears that the dollars spent provincially can have a dramatic economic "spin-off" effect locally. This can show up in increased sales, materials and labor for facade development, materials and labor for capital improvements, business marketing and promotion activities, tourism, new building construction, etc. Also, the revitalization and increased stability of local businesses cannot be overlooked. There is a strong indication that limited tax dollars can have a positive economic development impact on the business community in downtown northern Alberta.

- While communities can engage in downtown revitalization programs independently through their own merchants' associations and municipal councils, the evidence strongly suggests that more can be achieved if a provincial program is in place to assist interested groups both financially and technically. A provincial program does not necessarily have to be "expensive" in order to be successful. While it is true that two other provinces with successful programs have a "grant" component, the largest

portion of the program is centred around the revolving-fund concept. Money borrowed by municipalities for downtown revitalization is paid back over a period of years. However, small grants can be an effective incentive for communities to develop initial concept planning, encourage individual business facade improvement to fit an overall community strategy, and undertake collective marketing strategies.

- Present revitalization activities in Alberta primarily involve the Departments of Municipal Affairs and Economic Development and Trade and include such initiatives as BRZ legislation and the ***Self Help Action Kit.*** In terms of technical and advisory assistance there is some attempt at a co-ordinated approach between these two departments, although limited staffing resources have curtailed their involvement in the community. Resources designated to downtown revitalization concerns and community projects could provide the much-needed assistance, direction and support required by revitalizing communities. It appears there may be need for a more focused government response in actually designating an appropriate group to work exclusively in this area.

- The lack of financial assistance for revitalization projects is apparent in the project outline and implementation phases. Financial assistance is required for components such as project outline development, project co-ordination, capital projects, and promotions and marketing. Although some grant programs are available through Alberta Transportation & Utilities, Alberta Culture & Multiculturalism, and also the Northern Development Agreement, minor changes in their eligibility criteria could enhance their applicability to the revitalization process. Re-priorizing existing resources is not expensive and does not necessarily require an infusion of new money.

In reviewing the background report it was apparent to the Northern Alberta Development Council that downtown revitalization was an important and timely topic for many northern communities. Because of the many and varied aspects of effective revitalization projects and programs, the Council supported the Peace River Board of Trade in hosting a workshop in Peace River September 9-11, 1987. The Downtown Revitalization Workshop attracted 130 merchants, municipal leaders, planning commission members, government representatives, and resource people from successful Canadian programs to discuss planning and possible future initiatives.

Copies of the background report are available from the Northern Development Branch in Peace River.

WATER IN NORTHERN ALBERTA

In early 1986 the Northern Alberta Development Council began an intensive project to review concerns related to water, a valuable northern resource. Two hundred and twenty-one briefs on water and its management had been received by the Council at their public meetings over the last 10 years.

The project culminated on November 4, 5, 6, 1987 with the holding of a major conference in Grande Prairie. The conference, entitled "Water in Northern Alberta," brought together over 200 delegates from communities, interest groups, government and industry to examine ideas and suggest actions to deal with water-related issues in northern Alberta.

On day-one of the conference, the Hon. Ken Kowalski, Minister of Alberta Environment, addressed the audience. He outlined government policies, noted his personal commitment to northern issues and stated that he looked forward to receiving the recommendations of the delegates.

Mr. Kowalski was followed by "An Overview of Water in Northern Alberta" by the consultants who had prepared the major conference background document. Preparation of the background report had involved six focus groups held across the North and two regional workshops, held in Grand Centre and Fairview. The report preparation was overseen by a steering committee of Council, government and private sector members.

In response to the Overview, a panel of community representatives and those involved in water usage and development identified sectorally key northern water issues. Panelists were Margaret Lounds, Alberta Water Resources Commission; Gerald Raspberry, ID #21; Simon Waquan, Fort Chipewyan Community; Gary Webster, Canadian Petroleum Association; Don Appleby, Grand Centre Community Advisory Committee; and Peter Melnychuk, Assistant Deputy Minister, Alberta Environment.

Delegates enjoyed some time to examine displays and view several water-related audio-visual presentations prior to the evening keynote address by Michael Keating, author of *To the Last Drop: Canada and the World's Water Crisis.* Mr. Keating presented delegates with a global and Canadian perspective of water issues. He informed delegates that there still remained time for northern Albertans to manage their water resources to maintain their quality and quantity.

On day-two, delegates attended workshops focused on key concerns identified at group meetings held prior to the conference. Each workshop had a panel of experts from

government and the private sector who were well versed in the topic areas. The workshop areas were Groundwater Management; Community Water Supply; Farmland Erosion and Drainage; Surface Water Quality; Watershed & Wetland Management; Farms & Rural Water Supply; Tourism, Recreation & Fisheries; Industrial Water Uses; Native People's Concerns; and Water Diversion.

Les Cooke, representing the Alberta Water Resources Commission, provided the delegates at the day-two luncheon with a review of the membership and role of the Alberta Water Resources Commission.

In the evening workshop delegates presented their group's suggested actions as a basis for NADC recommendations to be forwarded to the government following the conference.

On day-three delegates once again met in small discussion groups to discuss common themes such as planning, monitoring and enforcement, information, program delivery, funding and research. Once again the delegates reported back in a plenary session to all present.

Michael Keating closed the conference with a review of the three days of proceedings and charged delegates to return to their communities to actively participate in the management of their environment. In closing, Bob Elliott, MLA, Chairman of the Northern Alberta Development Council, thanked delegates for their excellent participation.

Following the conference the Northern Alberta Development Council reviewed all the materials, presentations made by delegates, comments from previous focus groups and workshops, and NADC briefs; and formulated the following recommendations which have been presented for consideration by government.

Co-ordination

- The jurisdictional mandates over water resources are so extensively distributed throughout government that the public is confused and perceives a lack of co-ordination. Thus the following measures are recommended:

  a) that the co-ordination role of the Water Resources Commission be enhanced and that the public be made aware of its co-ordination functions

  b) that Alberta Environment in its reorganizational efforts recognize the importance of co-ordination and establish appropriate vehicles to facilitate it

c) that a directory be prepared for the public which would identify the role of all government departments involved in water-related issues; the directory should list a contact person and a 1-800 number

d) that it be reinforced that municipal and public input be sought at very early stages of project planning, since local input often sheds important light on an issue.

Integration

- Integration of land and water planning was a key issue repeatedly identified. Thus the following measures are recommeded:

a) that a committee be established which reviews Integrated Resource Plans with Water Basin Plans to ensure compatibility of each. Members of the public and local authorities should be on the committee. The Water Resources Commission may be an excellent vehicle to facilitate this function.

b) that Alberta Environment and regional planning commissions consult regularly regarding land use and water management projects.

c) that consideration be given to water management issues and impacts when new land is opened. Greater co-ordination is needed between public lands and water resource administrators to ensure that impacts on water resources are minimized.

Public Information and Education

- Repeatedly, in all topic areas, the issues of public information and education were identified. The following are recommended:

a) that Alberta Environment continue to publish reports and ensure the public be made fully aware of their availability.

Establishment of an environmental clearing house where the public could easily access information may be useful.

b) that consideration be given to writing all reports in "layman's terms" or at least producing an executive summary which simplifies and demystifies the often difficult scientific reporting.

c) that Alberta Environment, in conjunction with other related departments, develop a

major public awareness campaign that would highlight the effects of pollutants, waste disposal, environmental preservation, etc. The concept should be pro-active and use several mediums, i.e., television commercials, videos, newsletters, etc.

d) that the environmental 1-800 hot line be widely advertised and listed in telephone directories so that access is readily available to all Albertans. It should be listed directly under the RITE number.

- Education is seen as the key to the future. Therefore, the NADC recommends that Alberta Environment continue to work with Alberta Education to develop educational programs to be implemented in Alberta schools. A heightened awareness campaign for youth may be part of this effort.

Native Concerns

- As environmental issues are of crucial concern to the way of life for native people in northern Alberta, it is recommended that native communities be heavily involved in assessing environmental impacts which will affect their communities and environs. Native people should be an integral part of policy and project development especially when upstream industrial development may have impacts.

Groundwater Management

- Groundwater was identified as an area with many concerns. In light of delegates' views, the NADC recommends:

a) that active research into groundwater supplies and the interface between groundwater and surface water be continued and strengthened.

b) that a groundwater policy be developed in conjunction with industry, municipal leaders, government, and residents of the North to protect quantity and quality of groundwater supplies. A vital component of the policy should be a strong monitoring and enforcement program. The policy should be in place within the year.

c) that a clear goundwater policy which deals with future withdrawals for the Cold Lake-Beaver River Basin be developed within the next six months.

Industrial Usage

- In order to encourage sustainable development, the industrial sector must be aware of

its limits. Therefore the NADC recommends:

a) that regional round tables or task forces be established (possibly on the basis of water basins) to discuss industrial policy for the water basins. Membership in these task forces should include industrial, municipal, governmental, agricultural, recreational, native and general public representation.

b) that greater co-operation be developed between industry and communities, and that Alberta Environment strive to ensure that industry and communities are dialoguing over the issues related to environmental matters.

c) that the practice of deep well injection and its implications be carefully monitored and that when deep well injection is to be used in a new area, appropriate research into its impact be conducted.

d) that the continued use of potable groundwater and non-flowing surface water for industrial purposes be seriously restrained. Community and agricultural use must be a priority.

e) that water quality monitoring continue and that strong enforcement of the regulations result when a transgression occurs. Water quality should be paramount in the management of northern waters.

Surface Water Quality

- The NADC recommends that a major study on non-point pollutants (i.e., fertilizers, pesticides, run-off, etc.) and their impacts on northern rivers and water supplies be conducted by Alberta Environment in conjunction with appropriate departments. A steering committee composed of government, municipal, agricultural, industrial, recreational and general public representatives should be an integral part of the study.

- To ensure water testing facilities are accessible to northern residents, the NADC would encourage the location of laboratory facilities in regional centres throughout the North. The feasibility of operating such centres by the private sector should be explored.

Wetlands

- Recognizing the sensitivity and uniqueness of wetlands to the environmental regime, it is recommended that the Water Resources Commission move ahead and complete a

provincial policy on wetlands within the next two years. Immediate release of its wetland inventory should also be considered.

Research

- It is recommended that the concept of zero-discharge versus assimilative discharge versus zero-discharge of persistent toxics, should be investigated and a committee of representatives of all sectors — industry, government, local government, native peoples and the general public — be established to determine a provincial policy. This policy should be in place within the next three years.

- That research into decreasing pollutants from pulp mills, oil sands plants and any other applicable heavy industry be conducted in order to maintain the quality and quantity of surface water supplies.

- The 10 specific topics of this conference all indicated a need for further research and investigation. The NADC recommends that Alberta Environment continue with an active data collection and research program and that water basin and sub-basin planning be stepped up in order to complete the northern basin studies within the next three years.

- As part of all research efforts, local input and involvement should be mandatory. Local councils should be consulted prior to the commencement of projects and local input sought through an appropriate public involvement technique. Alberta Environment should have a unit in place which specializes in public involvement and a pro-active approach.

Funding

- The timing and availability of government funds for local drainage and community water and sewer projects is crucial in northern areas. It is recommended that a consultative program be worked out with the communities, and that funds be released based upon an agreed to schedule.

- Supplementary funding for water and sewer systems to meet special needs in remote and isolated communities should be continued along with the development of training programs for service personnel.

- Funding programs for on-farm water supplies should be continued through the co-operation of PFRA, Alberta Agriculture and Alberta Environment.

- The NADC recommends that Alberta Environment substantially increase its funding structure for drainage and erosion progams in northern Alberta.

Jurisdictional Agreements

- The Northern Alberta Development Council urges Alberta Environment to enter into necessary jurisdictional agreements with British Columbia and the Northwest Territories governments within three years.

Water Diversion

- Northerners have indicated a strong opposition to water diversion and the NADC recommends that major water diversion projects involving inter-basin transfers not take place.

FORT CHIPEWYAN/FORT VERMILION BICENTENNIAL

The Northern Alberta Development Council took an active role in the year under review in helping Fort Chipewyan and Fort Vermilion — Alberta's bicentennial communities — to plan their celebrations and promotions to mark this first-time occasion in the history of Alberta.

The Council lent expertise to the planning process of the Bicentennial Committees, assisted the communities in designing a bicentennial year calendar of events and in approaching government for event funding.

At the close of the fiscal year the Chairman of the Northern Alberta Development Council, Dr. Bob Elliott, MLA, introduced a motion in the Legislative Assembly to proclaim 1988 as the bicentennial year for Fort Chipewyan and Fort Vermilion. Council also took the lead in designing special plaques to commemorate the occasion.

Fort Chipewyan and Fort Vermilion are Alberta's first bicentennial communities. In a province which itself is only 83 years old, a 200th year anniversary is remarkable. The history of Fort Chipewyan and Fort Vermilion is, in fact, the pre-history of Alberta — its early fur trade, its exploration and its settlement.

Alberta was developed from the North first. Early explorers and traders plied the northern waterways. In 1788 a fort was established at Fort Chipewyan and, soon afterward, in the Fort Vermilion district. It was from these outposts that the Hudson's Bay Company and explorers gained a foothold in western and northern Canada.

Fort Chipewyan is the oldest settlement in Alberta. It was founded in 1788 by Roderick Mackenzie, Alexander Mackenzie's cousin, as a trading post of the Northwest Company. It has been continuously occupied since that time.

The post was established in a region known as the "Eldorado of the Fur Trade." Early settlers marvelled at the natural resources: Lake Athabasca, the Canadian Shield, the Peace-Athabasca Delta and lands to the west which are now Canada's largest park — the Wood Buffalo National Park.

The early history of Fort Vermilion combines fur trading, exploration and agriculture. Seventeen eighty-eight marked the beginnings of recorded exploration, trade and settlement in Fort Vermilion. A trading post, known as "The Old Establishment," was built by Charles Boyer (Northwest Company) at the mouth of the Boyer River, downstream from present day Fort Vermilion. From 1788 to 1830 posts were built and abandoned at or near the "Fort" and upstream toward the Keg River. The names varied, but Fort Vermilion is the one that survived.

In recent years the Northern Alberta Development Council has been very impressed with the progress made by Fort Chipewyan and Fort Vermilion. They have become physically less isolated through new roads, a bridge and air transportation. Economically, the two communities have built on their strengths. Fort Chipewyan has gained a world-class tourist lodge. This year it is researching and developing its unique granite building stone resource. Likewise, Fort Vermilion is an active medical and business service centre to one of the most northerly agricultural regions in the world.

The 1988 Bicentennial is an important event for Fort Chipewyan and Fort Vermilion. The communities are well-organized and are enthusiastic about sharing 1988 as an Alberta event as well.

MEDICAL ELECTIVES BURSARY

In September of 1984, the Northern Alberta Development Council set up a three-year Medical Electives Bursary as a follow-up to the Council's very successful Medical Recruitment Interchanges. The interchanges brought northern community representatives together with medical students from the University of Alberta and the University of Calgary.

The purpose of the Medical Electives Bursary was to help medical students to defray the travel and accommodation costs of taking course electives in northern Alberta. The intent of the project was to encourage medical doctors to locate in northern Alberta upon

graduation by giving them a sample of life in the North.

In the three-year span of the project, 49 medical students received grants totalling $40,595 to do practicums in rural family practice and various specialties. Practicums were taken in:

- Beaverlodge
- Bonnyville
- Fort McMurray
- Grande Cache
- Grande Prairie
- Grimshaw/Berwyn
- High Level
- Lac La Biche
- Peace River
- Slave Lake
- St. Paul
- Valleyview
- Whitecourt

The success of the project has seen it now included as a special sub-program under the Northern Alberta Development Council Student Bursary Program. Medical students interested in more information can contact the Northern Development Branch in Peace River or the elective co-ordinator at the University of Alberta and the University of Calgary.

STUDENT BURSARY PROGRAM

Created in 1974, the Northern Alberta Development Council Student Bursary Program is designed to encourage young people to obtain technical training or professional qualifications that are in high demand in northern areas of the province.

Students assisted through the program are obligated to work in northern Alberta, preferably in remote and isolated locations, for at least one year for each year of bursary support received.

The Bursary Program is administered by the Students Finance Board. A selection committee, made up of four members of the Northern Alberta Development Council and one representative each from the Metis Association of Alberta, the Students Finance Board and Alberta Career Development & Employment, is responsible for the establishment of guidelines and selection of candidates for bursary support.

During the year under review, some adjustments were made to the Program regulations to increase flexibility in providing assistance to applicants. On the basis of criteria including need, northern experience and special circumstances, the Selection Committee granted bursary assistance in 1987/88 to 134 applicants for a total of $557,750. The present bursary rates are up to $3,500 for single students and up to $6,000 for married students per academic year. Since the inception of the program 1,859 bursaries have been awarded to students at a total expenditure of $6.0 million. Bursaries have been awarded in many areas including health care, education, social services, agriculture, law, business-related studies and engineering. Most of the returning graduates have remained in the North to contribute to the growing and diverse economy of the region.

NEW COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

In late 1987, through public advertisements in all northern newspapers, nominations were solicited from northern community groups and organizations for nominees to replace retiring public members of the Council.

In March, 1988, the Provincial Cabinet, through the Minister Responsible for Northern Development, the Hon. Al "Boomer" Adair, appointed three new members to the Northern Alberta Development Council. The membership of 1988/89 includes:

Bob Elliott, MLA, Beaverlodge, Chairman
Fred Gingerich, Athabasca, Vice-Chairman
Mike Beaver, Desmarais
John Drobot, MLA, St. Paul
Marcel Ducharme, Bonnyville
Elaine Gauthier, Plamondon
Kim Ghostkeeper, Paddle Prairie
Bernie Hornby, Fox Creek
Don Keith, Fort McMurray
Jim Reynolds, Fairview.

NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT BRANCH

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The purpose of the Northern Development Branch is to participate in developing and maintaining a socio-economic environment in northern Alberta which gives maximum opportunity for inhabitants of the area to grow and prosper.

In achieving its purpose, the Branch provides all the administrative and technical support activities required by the Northern Alberta Development Council, and attempts to implement a flexible strategy of achieving specific socio-economic improvements in northern Alberta.

The Branch seeks to advance the development of human and natural resources in northern Alberta, as well as to aid in community development goals such as local decision-making and planning. It delves into a wide variety of issues as a result of briefs received by the Northern Alberta Development Council, e.g., agriculture, resource development, business development, tourism, manpower training, community and regional infrastructure, education, social services, recreation, communications and transportation.

The **Research and Co-ordination Section** of the Branch provides a planning and co-ordination function for northern Alberta socio-economic improvements. Basic research is performed and background and position papers prepared in support of the Council in its role as an advisory body to government. Examples of major research projects undertaken by the section on behalf of the Council during the fiscal year included: review papers and studies in the areas of future transportation needs, downtown revitalization, agricultural land use, professional manpower needs, regional resource development, family violence, ambulance services, tourism and water development.

The Section also facilitates and assists in the co-ordination of activities of various line departments and agencies to achieve maximum opportunities for socio-economic development in northern Alberta. In the area of northern co-ordination efforts on behalf of the Council, extensive staff time was spent on interdepartmental liaison activities involving business development projects, transportation planning, water and sewer delivery, remote community economic development, local government services, communication needs, resource development plans, commercial trapping and fishing, infrastructure services, social employment programs and vocational training.

Although not directly involved in Council activities, the **Agreement Administration Section** provides information to the members as required. The purpose of the Section is to implement the Canada/Alberta Northern Development Agreement over the 1986-91 time period. This involves assessing applications and undertaking the necessary financial

disbursement and control procedures.

The **Council Administration Section** provides technical and logistical support to the Chairman's office and to individual Council members for the monthly meetings. During 1987/88 six public meetings, three closed meetings, a conference and a number of special activities were organized. Detailed follow-up to the Student Bursary Program, assistance in the public nomination process and appointment of three new Council members were also undertaken. **One hundred and ninety-nine** briefs were received by Council during the fiscal year, and background documentation, interdepartmental liaison activities and draft responses were undertaken in each case by the Section staff.

A significant amount of the Branch's time during the year under review was related to preparation and follow-up to the Northern Water Conference held in Grande prairie.

Other major Branch follow-up activities arising from the briefs and/or Council initiated requests: Nampa seniors housing, northern tax allowance, Highway 750, Highway 686, Chinchaga Road, tourism development programs, Keg River IRP, handicapped needs in Grande Prairie, EFRC in High Prairie, D.A. Thomas replica, Highway 49, La Crete cheese factory, REDC funding, University of Alberta Extension Library, Swan Hills campsite development, Winagami Lake fishery, Rainbow Lake banking services, Zama postal services, speech therapy needs, redesignation of Highway 88, Fort Vermilion Bicentennial, La Crete airport, La Crete Telephones, La Crete medical services, Wabasca community radio, Highway 67 paving, Red Earth RCMP housing, Red Earth ambulance services, Fox Creek social services, Grande Cache adult education, native teacher education, Red Earth water and sewer, Loon Lake concerns, Peerless Lake concerns, trappers compensation, employment in oil and gas sector, Cold Lake commercial fishing, regional libraries, St. Paul Crisis Association, Grand Centre housing, Lakeland Tourist Association, Trout Lake community recreation, municipal park funding, Highway 897, Cold Lake Interpretive Centre, Metis Settlement utility services, Cold Lake groundwater policy, wild rice industry, game ranching, ethanol plant development, Highway 55, Alberta/ Saskatchewan interprovincial park proposal, D.A. Thomas reconstruction, Highway 36, REDC funding, CN rail in McLennan, street assistance program, Education Tax Review proposals, Fox Creek airport terminal, tourism development, satellite crisis centres, adult literacy programs, machinery tax, eduction financing, Highway 947, lake lot development, lynx trapping quotas, CFS Beaverlodge, physiotherapy needs, Highway 721, groundwater use, SO_2 emissions, recreation funding, Highway 59, bee importation.

In its work as a co-ordinator and facilitator and, particularly, as a supplier of technical support to the Northern Alberta Development Council, the Branch continued to maintain a vital communications link between northern people and government.